



SIERRA CLUB

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Bush Administration Proposes Devaluing the Life of Seniors Using This Mathematical Trick to Permit Polluters to Pollute Even More.

When it comes to protecting people from pollution, senior citizens aren't worth as much as younger people, according to the Bush Administration's new proposal for calculating the benefits of cutting life-threatening pollution. The Bush Administration's so-called "Senior Death Discount" says that a 70 year old's life is worth less than that of a younger person. Using this mathematical trick, the Bush Administration would re-write the way the government calculates the value of pollution safeguards, because an air-pollution filter that saves lives may not be worth installing if it only saves the lives of senior citizens.

Lessening the value we place on human life so that polluting companies can avoid environmental safeguards is both morally and scientific reckless. With modern technology, it's easier than ever to protect families from air pollution. So why is the Bush Administration allowing polluting corporations to rewrite environmental laws, escape their responsibilities and benefit at our expense?

Typically, government agencies attribute a \$6.1 million value to each human life when evaluating new rules. However, the Bush Administration changed this calculation and reduced the value of a life to \$3.7 million per person, and only \$2.3 million for anybody over the age of 70. This biased form of cost-benefit analysis makes environmental safeguards appear less worthwhile by lowering the hypothetical monetary value of human life. The EPA has used the new cost-benefit assumptions to justify the reduced public health protections contained in the Administration's air pollution bill introduced last month. The decision to devalue the life of a senior is based on a single 1982 study now disavowed by its author.

I like breathing clean air today as much as I did as a young woman. Instead of manipulating math to make more pollution seem acceptable, the Administration should make it a priority to protect the health and safety of

americans of all ages. Children deserve clean air and so do I.

Air pollution already poses a significant health threat to senior citizens in Pennsylvania.

In western Pennsylvania ,the Abt Associates in a recent study ,estimated that in 2001 alone, emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides from four Western Pennsylvania power plants , Cheswick, Hatfields Ferry, Homer City, and Keystone led to a range of serious adverse health effects such as, over 1000 premature deaths; more than 700 cases of chronic bronchitis;nearly 400 hospital admissions; over 22,000 asthma attacks. Allegheny County alone has, according to the latest census figures, 228,416 persons over 65 years of age. or 17.8%of the population.

Please do not weaken the Clean Air Act, for the sake of all the seniors, your mothers and fathers. Remember you too will be a senior .

Thank you